

More Lies From The Bush Fascists

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President George W. Bush and his director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, are telling the American people that an unaccountable executive branch is necessary for their protection. Without the Protect America Act, Bush and McConnell claim, the executive branch will not be able to spy on terrorists, and we will all be blown up. Terrorists can only be stopped, Bush says, if Bush has the right to spy on everyone without any oversight by courts.

The fight over the Protect America Act has everything to do with our safety, only not in the way that Bush and McConnell assert.

Bush says the Democrats have put "our country more in danger of an attack" by letting the Protect America Act lapse. This claim is nonsense. The 30 year old Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act gives the executive branch all the power it needs to spy on terrorists.

The choice between FISA and the Protect America Act has nothing whatsoever to do with terrorism, at least not from foreign terrorists. Bush and his brownshirts object to FISA, because the law requires Bush to obtain warrants from a FISA court. Warrants mean that Bush is accountable. Bush and his brownshirts argue that accountability is an infringement on the power of the president.

To escape accountability, the Brownshirt Party came up with the Protect America Act. This act eliminates Bush's accountability to judges and gives the telecom companies immunity from the felonies they committed by acquiescing in Bush's illegal spying.

Bush began violating the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in October 2001 <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10488458/> when he spied on Americans without obtaining warrants from the FISA court.

Bush pressured telecom companies to break the law in order to enable his illegal spying. In court documents, Joseph P. Nacchio, former CEO of Qwest Communications International, states that his firm was approached more than six months *before* the September 11, 2001, attacks and asked to participate in a spying operation that Qwest believed to be illegal. When Qwest refused, the Bush administration withdrew opportunities for contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Nacchio himself was subsequently indicted for insider trading, sending the message to all telecom companies to cooperate with the Bush regime or else. <http://www.crooksandliars.com/2007/10/16/former-telcom-ceo-bushs-illegal-spying-began-months-before-911-attacks/>

Bush has not been held accountable for the felonies he committed and for leading telecom companies into a life of crime.

As the lawmakers who gave us FISA understood, spying on people without warrants lets a political party collect dirt on its adversaries with which to blackmail them. As Bush illegally spied a long time before word of it got out, blackmail might be the reason the Democrats have ignored their congressional election mandate and have not put a stop to Bush's illegal wars and unconstitutional police state measures.

Perhaps the Democrats have finally caught on that they cannot function as a political party as long as they continue to permit Bush to spy on them. For one reason or another, they have let the Orwellian-named Protect America Act expire.

With the Protect America Act, Bush and his brownshirts are trying to establish the independence of the executive branch from statutory law and the Constitution. The FISA law means that the president is accountable to federal judges for warrants. Bush and the brownshirt Republicans are striving to make the president independent of all accountability. The brownshirts insist that the leader knows best and can tolerate no interference from the law, the judiciary, the Congress, or the Constitution, and certainly not from the American people who, the brownshirts tell us, won't be safe unless Bush is very powerful.

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison saw it differently. The American people cannot be safe unless the president is accountable and under many restraints.

Pray that the Democrats have caught on that they cannot give the executive branch unaccountable powers to spy and still have grounds on which to refuse the executive branch unaccountable powers elsewhere.

Republicans have used the "war on terror" to create an unaccountable executive. To prevent the presidency from becoming a dictatorial office, it is crucial that Congress cease acquiescing in Bush's grab for powers. As the Founding Fathers warned us, the terrorists we have to fear are the ones in power in Washington.

The al Qaeda terrorists, with whom Bush has been frightening us, have no power to destroy our liberties. Compared to the loss of liberty, a terrorist attack is nothing.

Meanwhile, Bush, the beneficiary of two stolen elections, has urged Zimbabwe to hold a fair election. America gets away with its hypocrisy because no one in our government has enough shame to blush.

Paul Craig Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury during President Reagan's first term. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal. He has held numerous academic appointments, including the William E. Simon Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, and Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He was awarded the Legion of Honor by French President Francois Mitterrand.

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